

# SWEETWATER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SWEETWATER SCHOOL DISTRICT BACKGROUND

The Sweetwater District serves students in grades 7-12 and adult learners in the communities of Bonita, Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, National City, Otay Mesa, San Ysidro and South San Diego. Sweetwater is the largest secondary system in California, serving more than 35,000 students at 21 schools and 41,000 adult learners at 5 campuses.

## PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

### "COMPACT FOR SUCCESS" (GUARANTEED ADMISSION TO SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY)

This initiative guarantees admission to San Diego State University for all incoming seventh graders who will graduate high school in the years 2006, 2007 or 2008. The program also sets up a network of academic and counseling support- from seventh grade up to graduation- to ensure every student involved in the program is prepared for college.

### PROPOSITION BB (SCHOOL BONDS)

Sweetwater's \$187 million school repair bond - overwhelmingly supported by the community with 72.4% voter approval in November of 2000 - will modernize and improve school facilities at 19 district schools. Phase One will involve rebuilding the following schools: Mar Vista High School in Imperial Beach (\$10.9 million), Sweetwater High School in National City (\$10.2 million), San Ysidro High School in San Diego (\$12 million over a 4 year period), and Chula Vista Middle School (\$8.2 million). All schools were completed in November of 2002. Phase Two is a projected year-long planning process involving National City Middle School, Southwest Junior in San Diego, and Chula Vista High that began in fall of 2002.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Currently, all students must pass the District's English Essay Exam as an eighth-grade promotion and a high school graduation requirement. Beginning in 2004, all graduating seniors will be required to perform 30 hours of community service, a complete senior portfolio project, and pass the state-mandated High School Exit Exam which will replace the English Essay Exam. Sweetwater high schools have already implemented senior portfolios and exhibitions with site-specific criteria and an evaluation process, but by 2004, these will be standardized district-wide.

### NON-COMPLETION RATE ("DROP OUT" RATE)

The percentage of students dropping out of Sweetwater schools is the lowest in the district's history. Rates have continued to drop: school year 1998-1999 had a rate of 2.5%, school year 1999-2000 had a drop-out rate of 2.0%, school year 2000-2001 had a drop-out rate of 1.6% and school year 2001-2002 had a drop out rate of 1.3%.

### SWEETWATER LEADERSHIP

The leadership of Sweetwater teachers is selected for recognition by local, state and national organizations, including the Association of California School Administrators, the Institute for Education Inquiry and the National Education Association.

## SWEETWATER DISTRICT SCHOOLS' ACHIEVEMENTS

- As of Fall 2001, 25 of 27 Sweetwater district schools have earned California Distinguished School status from the California Department of Education for their student and community involvement and optimum learning environment.
- The California School Board Association's *Golden Bell* program recognizes innovative instructional programs and partnerships. In 2002, Sweetwater earned three awards- the most a district can receive. Sweetwater is the state's leader in Golden Bells received with 16.
- In 2002, students at 11 of Sweetwater's high schools have earned more than 1,600 awards in the first statewide merit-based scholarship program - placing Sweetwater among the top five districts in California in total number of awards received.
- Sweetwater schools have consistently increased their state Academic Performance Index (API) over the past three years. In 2002, 14 of 19 schools' API scores increased while 10 schools scored higher than their state-determined targets. The API ranks California schools in terms of school performance, academic growth goals, and the schools' yearly progress. Sweetwater is the largest organization in the state to raise academic performance levels at every single school.
- Sweetwater District will transform Southwest Junior High into a school for biliteracy due to a \$1.5 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. Over the next five years, Southwest Junior will plan and implement Literacy Squared (Literacy)-a school wide project promoting cross-cultural education. The goal of Literacy is to have every Southwest Junior High student achieve fluency in two languages through second language classes, intensive academic support and cultural enrichment activities.



- For the fourth consecutive year, a Sweetwater school claimed top honors in the San Diego County Academic Decathlon. Southwest High came in first, with Bonita Vista and EastLake highs placing second and third, respectively. Southwest students earned 24 of the district's 70 individual student medals; three of them as overall top students.
- Sweetwater's approximately 4,700 graduating seniors in 2003 received more than \$16.5 million in scholarships and grants to help pay for postsecondary education.
- The Sweetwater District was honored with five California School Public Relations Association (CalSPRA) awards for 2003. These awards recognize the district's efforts in the area of communications – from newsletters to Internet sites to brochures.
- In 2003, the Chula Vista High School for Creative and Performing Arts was recognized as one of the top 100 music departments among the 18,000 public high schools in the United States by the GRAMMY Foundation, a non-profit arm of the Recording Academy. Chula Vista is the only school in San Diego County to be selected to receive this award three consecutive times.

## **SWEETWATER ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Adult and Continuing Education Programs can help adults learn English, earn a high school diploma or GED certificate, or brush up on their job skills. In 2000-01, more than 41,000 adults enrolled in academic and personal enrichment classes, making the Sweetwater Adult Education Program among the largest programs of its kind in California.

### **Community Development Department**

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